

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

~~setting license parameters associated with at least one network resource, said license parameters including load balancing criteria;~~

receiving a request to access ~~the a~~ network resource accessible through each of a plurality of servers, wherein licenses to access said network resource are distributed to each respective said servers and wherein a total of said licenses distributed to said servers corresponds to a maximum limit of allowed licensed connections to said network resource;

~~determining if the license parameters will permit whether~~ granting the requested access to the network resource provides a number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit; and

granting the requested access to the network resource if it is determined that the ~~license parameters permit the requested access to the network resource~~ granting of the requested access provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit; and

~~wherein using load balancing to direct said granting the granted requested access is based at least in part on the load balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters to one of said servers having at least one of its said respective licenses available for said requested access.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~setting the license parameters associated with the~~ said network resource includes ~~setting license parameters associated with an application available from at least one~~ each of said servers.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes said servers include mail servers and wherein said licenses distributed to said servers include licenses allocated~~ allocating licensed access to a plurality of said mail servers based on usernames assigned to said mail servers.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~setting the license parameters associated with the network resource includes said servers include mail servers and wherein said licenses distributed to said servers include license allocated~~ allocating licensed access to said mail servers based on geographic information associated with users that request access to the network resource.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising keeping at least one of a local log or syslog to track information associated with licensed connections to the network resource.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising providing third-party access to at least one of the local log or syslog to allow licenses associated with the tracked information stored therein to be remotely managed or monitored.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a warning message if ~~a~~ said maximum limit of licensed connections is getting near.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising arranging a plurality of network resources and their~~ wherein associated license parameters

maximum limits of allowed licensed connections, of a plurality of network resources, are arranged according to a parent/child arrangement.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a means for ~~setting license parameters associated with storing a maximum limit of~~  
allowed licensed connections to at least one network resource, said license parameters including  
load balancing criteria accessible through each of a plurality of servers, wherein licenses to  
access said at least one network resource are distributed to each respective said servers and  
wherein a total of said licenses distributed to said servers corresponds to said maximum limit;

a means for receiving a request to access the network resource; and

a means for determining ~~if the license parameters will permit whether granting the~~  
requested access to the at least one network resource provides a number of licensed connections  
equal to or less than said maximum limit, and for granting the requested access to the at least  
one network resource if it is determined that the license parameters permit the requested access  
to the network resource and wherein said granting the access is based at least in part on the load  
balancing criteria that are included with said license parameters granting of the requested access  
provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit, and  
further for using load balancing to direct said granted requested access to one of said servers  
having at least one of its said respective licenses available for said requested access.

13. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12 wherein the means for  
~~setting the license parameters associated with storing said maximum limit of allowed licensed~~  
connections to the at least one network resource sets license parameters associated with  
stores a  
maximum limit of allowed licensed connections to an application available from at least one said  
plurality of servers.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12 wherein ~~the means for setting the license parameters associated with the network resource~~ said servers include mail servers and wherein said licenses distributed to said servers include licenses ~~allocated~~ allocates ~~licensed access to a plurality of said mail servers based on usernames assigned to said mail servers.~~

16. (Original) The system of claim 12, further comprising:  
a means for tracking information associated with licensed connections to the network resource; and  
a means for providing access to the tracked information.

17. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 12, further comprising a means for warning if ~~a~~ said maximum limit of licensed connections is being at least approached.

18-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:  
a file adapted to ~~be set with license parameters associated with~~ store a maximum limit of allowed licensed connections to at least one network resource accessible through each of a plurality of servers, wherein licenses to access said at least one network resource are distributed to each respective said servers and wherein a total of said licenses distributed to said servers corresponds to said maximum limit; and

a network device that includes said file, and being adapted to determine if ~~the license parameters that are set in said file permit whether granting~~ a requested access to the at least one network resource provides a number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit and adapted to grant the requested access to the at least one network resource if the granting of the requested access provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit, and further adapted to use load balancing to direct said granted requested access to one of said servers having at least one of its said respective licenses available

~~for said requested access; license parameters are determined to permit the requested access, and wherein said network device is adapted to balance load to said at least one network resource using said license parameters.~~

38. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said network device is a switch adapted to direct said requested access to said one of said servers, which are to said at least one network resource from among a plurality of network resources communicatively coupled to said switch.

39. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein said ~~at least one resource is an~~ plurality of servers include email servers.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37, further comprising a data repository, included in said network device and accessible by said network device, to store log information usable by said network device to determine license usage and license compliance.

41. (Canceled)

42. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture, comprising:  
a storage medium storing instructions that are executable by a network device to:  
check license parameter settings associated with record a number of licensed connections to at least one network resource accessible through each of a plurality of servers, wherein licenses to access said at least one network resource are distributed to each respective said servers and wherein a total of said licenses distributed to said servers corresponds to a maximum limit of allowed licensed connections to said network resource;  
determine if the license parameters settings permit whether granting a requested access to the at least one network resource provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit; and

grant the requested access to the at least one network resource if ~~the license parameters are determined to permit the requested access, and wherein said grant includes balancing load to the at least one network resource using said license parameters~~ it is determined that the granting of the requested access provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit; and

use load balancing to direct said granted requested access to one of said servers having at least one of its said respective licenses available for said requested access.

43. (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 42 wherein said at least one resource is an email server.

44. (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 42 wherein said ~~storage medium further stores instructions executable by said network device to~~ determine whether granting said requested access to the at least one network resource provides said number of licensed connections equal to or less than said maximum limit, includes instructions executable by said network device to:

access a data repository adapted to store log information, including said recorded number of licensed connections; and

use said log information to determine license usage and license compliance.

45. (Canceled)